

Message Text

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ETHIOPIA-EMPEROR REACTION

ADDIS ABABA, SEPT 12, 1974

ANYONE FLYING INTO ADDIS ABABA AND BEING UNAWARE OF THE
DEPOSITION OF EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE EARLIER TODAY WOULD SEE A
CAPITAL CITY WHERE LIFE CONTINUES TO BE ALMOST NORMAL.
SHOPS ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS AND SEEM TO BE DOING A THRIVING
BUSINESS BUT THERE ARE NO REPORTS OF PANIC BUYING BY THE
FOREIGN COMMUNITY. HAWKERS CONTINUE TO PLY THEIR WARES ON STREET
CORNERS, BEGGARS ARE MANNING THEIR USUAL HAUNTS AND ESSENTIAL
SERVICES APPEAR TO BE VIRTUALLY UNAFFECTED BY THE DRAMATIC
TURN OF EVENTS.
THE ONLY OUTWARD SIGNS THAT SOMETHING UNUSUAL HAS HAPPENED IS THE
APPEARANCE AT CERTAIN KEY POINTS OF THE CAPITAL OF TANKS AND
ARMOURED CARS PLUS JEEP LOADS OF FULLY ARMED TROOPS MANY WITH THE
GREEN AND BLACK ETHITIOPIA FIRST STICKERS PASTED TO THEIR BATTLE
HELMETS. HERE AND THERE SMALL FOOT PATROLS OF TROOPS AND
POLICE WANDER AROUND TO BE GIVEN AN EXTREMELY WARL WELCOME BY THE
POPULACE WHO GATHER AROUND THEM HOPING TO GET SOME INSIDE
INFORMATION ON THE LATEST SITUATION.
KNOT OF PEOPLE ARE ALSO GATHERED HERE AND THERE LISTENING TO
SMALL TRANSISTOR RADIOS AND THE MARTIAL MUSIC WHICH HAS BEEN
BLARING ACROSS THE MILE HIGH CITY OF EUCALPTUS TREES, SKYSCRAPERS
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AND MUD NATIVE TUKULS (HOUSES)

OTHERS ARE SIMPLY STANDING AROUND THE IMPRESSIVE LOOKING TANKS
AND ARMoured CARS TALKING AND JOKING WITH THE SOLDIERS
MANNING THEM. ALTHOUGH THERE IS AN UNDERLYING ATMOSPHERE OF
UNCERTAINTY AND APPREHENSION THIS IS NATURAL FOR MOST OF THESE
PEOPLE THERE HAS NEVER BEEN AN ETHIOPIA WITHOUT THE GUIDING
FORCE OF THE MAN WHO NOW FINDS HIMSELF A NORMAL ETHIOPIAN
CITIZEN.

BUT THIS FEELING IS ACCOMPANIED BY WHAT COULD ALMOST BE DESCRIBED
AS A MOOD OF RELIEF THAT THE WRENCHING AND CONSUMING EVENTS OF THE
PAST SIX (6) MONTHS HAVE FINALLY BEEN BROUGHT TO SOME SORT OF
HEAD. SOME REPORTS SPEAK OF PEOPLE GIVING THE TROOPS GARLANDS OF
FLOWERS AND PERSONALLY THANKING THEM FOR THEIR ACTION.

BUT MANY PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE ARE VOICING FEARS FOR THE FUTURE AND
ONE INTELLECUTAL TOLD ME AS CORRUPT AND DECADENT AS THE EMPEROR
MIGHT HAVE BEEN, HE WAS NOTHELESS THE GLUE THAT HELD THE ETHIOPIAN
FABRIC TOGETHER AND NOW THAT GLUE HAS BEEN REMOVED.

MOST URBAN ETHIOPIANS HAVE CLEARLY PLACED THEIR COMPLETE FAITH
AND TRUST IN THE MILITARY MOVEMENT BUT REALISE THERE IS A
CAVERNOUSPOLITICAL VACUUM TO BE FILLED WITH THE DEPARTURE OF THE
MAN WHO IS SYNYMOUS WITH ETHIOPIA AND THE AFRICAN CONTINENT
AS A WHOLE.

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